



Action Alert #2: BESE needs to hear from you!

December 7, 2018

The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) meets next Tuesday and Wednesday (December 11th and 12th) to discuss two important issues related to students with disabilities:

1. [Changes to the eligibility criteria for students taking the alternate assessment](#) and,
2. Consideration of charter school extensions, nine of which are in violation of the required enrollment levels of students with disabilities established by [Act 467 of 2015](#).

Questions to think about:

- Do you agree with the changes to the eligibility criteria for students to take the alternative assessment?
- Do you think BESE should renew contracts with charter schools that fail to meet the legally required enrollment rates of students with disabilities?

How to Take Action

If you are concerned about these issues:

- Contact your [BESE Member and the At-Large BESE Members](#)
- Put on your Yellow Shirt and attend the BESE Committee meetings on December 11th.

More Information

Eligibility for Alternate Assessment

On Tuesday, December 11th, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. BESE's Academic Goals and Instructional Improvement Committee will consider [changes to the eligibility criteria for students to take the alternate assessment](#). The language being considered by BESE includes revisions recommended by the Special Education Advisory Panel.

Why the change?

Currently, more students in Louisiana are determined eligible to take the alternate assessment than federal rules allow.

What changes are being proposed for alternate assessment eligibility criteria?

There will not be any changes for alternate assessment eligibility students who

enter high school by the 2019-2020 school year. For younger students, those who enter high school in the year 2020 and beyond, the criteria will consider the student's functioning levels in both cognitive AND adaptive behavior domains. Currently, a student can be deemed eligible based on their functioning level in either cognitive OR adaptive behavior domains.

The proposed changes appear appropriate for Louisiana to meet federal compliance requirements.

Charter School Contract Renewals

During the School Innovation and Turnaround Committee at 12:30 p.m. BESE will consider renewing charter school contracts. Although nine of the fourteen schools up for consideration do not meet Louisiana's legally required enrollment levels of students with disabilities, all nine of these schools are recommended to receive contract extensions. Parents of students with disabilities have long advocated for Louisiana's school choice system to provide access to all students, including students with disabilities. In 2015, the Louisiana Legislature passed [Act 467 of 2015](#) to clarify the expectation, and make it a legal requirement, for charter schools to enroll students with disabilities at a rate equal to or greater than 85% of the rate of students with disabilities found in traditional public schools. According to [data from the Louisiana Department of Education](#) (LDOE), most Louisiana charter schools fail to meet this legally required standard. Some of the schools being recommended for contract renewal next week enroll less than half of the rate of students with disabilities found in traditional public schools. Findings issued in [a report by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor](#) last year revealed the LDOE did not weigh critical violations of the law as more severe than non-critical violations and had not monitored the charter school enrollment law.

Confirm Your Action

Don't forget to let us know that you took action! Reply to this email or notify your [LaCAN Leader](#) to confirm your action.

Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how important these issues are to you and allows us to better work together in advocating for educational policies and practices that improve services and outcomes of students with disabilities.

Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108
email: info@laddc.org
website: www.lacanadvocates.org
facebook: www.facebook.com/lacanadvocates



Louisiana Developmental
Disabilities Council

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